

ignorant of the immeasurable difference of opinion between Chénier and M. de Chateaubriand. • .

M. de Chateaubriand obtained a great majority of votes, and was elected a Member of the Institute. This opened a wide field for conjecture in Paris. Every one was anxious to see how the author of the *Genie du Christianisme*, the faithful defender of the Bourbons, would bend his eloquence to pronounce the eulogium of a regicide. The time for the admission of the new Member of the Institute arrived, but in his discourse, copies of which were circulated in Paris, he had ventured to allude to the death of Louis XVI., and to raise his voice against the regicides. This did not displease Napoleon; but M. de Chateaubriand also made a profession of faith in favor of liberty, which, he said, found refuge amongst men of letters when banished from the political body. This was great boldness for the time; for though Bonaparte was secretly gratified at seeing the judges of Louis XVI. scourged by an heroic pen, yet those men held the highest situations under the Government. Cambacères filled the second place in the Empire, although at a great distance from the first; Merlin de Douai was also in power; and it is known how much liberty was stifled and hidden beneath the dazzling illusion of what is termed glory. A commission was named to examine the discourse of Chateaubriand. MM. Suard, de Segur, de Fontanes, and two or three other members of the same class of the Institute whose names I cannot recollect, were of opinion that the discourse should be read; but it was opposed by the majority;<sup>1</sup>

When Napoleon was informed of what had passed he demanded a sight of the address, which was presented to him by M. Daru. After having perused it he exclaimed, "Had this discourse been delivered I would have shut the gates of the Institute, and thrown M. de Chateaubriand into a dungeon for life." The storm long raged; at length means of conciliation were tried. The Emperor required M. de Chateaubriand to prepare another discourse, which the latter refused to do, in spite of every menace. Madame Gay applied to Madame Regnault de St. Jean d'Angely, who interested her husband